

THE LITERACY MATERIALS BULLETIN



11

Spring 1995

literacy • instructors • tutors • learners • administrators • coordinators • librarians • resource centres • learning centres

Do you have a favourite book, tape, periodical, poster, video, computer program . . . that you recommend to other literacy providers and learners? If so, the Literacy Materials Committee would like to hear from you. Please contact one of the people in the right sidebar with your recommendations or fill in the form on the back cover and mail it to me. Or if you are looking for a specific type of literacy material, let us know and we'll try to help you find it.

This issue of the *Literacy Materials Bulletin* contains reviews of an eclectic group of materials ranging from a new series of easy-to-read mystery novels to a handbook for instructors of students being treated for mental disorders. You can also find out about the new ABE Fundamental Level Math modules, two reading circle books, a manual on plain language writing, anthologies of popular fiction and nonfiction, a parenting book, a Canadian content reader/workbook and a novel about a heroic woman that is often one of the most popular books in any literacy materials collection. We're sure you will find something useful in these pages to add to your resources.

The Literacy Materials Committee welcomes Joyce Vowles, an instructor at the Columbia Square Adult Learning Centre, New Westminster. Joyce will join us in our relentless search for worthwhile literacy materials. But don't get the idea that we spend all our time with our noses stuck in books. Members of the committee have recently been involved in a number of exciting projects. Katie, Iris, Helen, Thomas and Laurie worked with the Association of B.C. Book Publishers to prepare a brochure of new literacy books. We are also involved in a project that is exploring the feasibility of establishing a provincial resource centre for literacy materials and literature. Both are cost-shared projects between the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour, BC and the National Literacy Secretariat. In addition, the Committee has participated in the showcase events of cost-shared literacy projects in Vancouver and Prince George. And, of course, we have been busy preparing this issue of the *Literacy Materials Bulletin*. We hope you like it!

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Titles:	The Sully Gomez Mystery Series • Dirty Money • Knockout Punch • Set to Explode • A Sucker for Redheads
Author:	Mel Cebulash
Publisher:	New Readers Press, 1993
Available:	Laubach Literacy of Canada, PO Box 6548, Station "A" St. John, NB, E2L 4R9 or in BC Artel Educational Resources Ltd. 5528 Kinsway, Burnaby, V5H 2G2 1-800-665-9255, 435-4949, fax (604) 435-1955
Price:	\$7.25 each
Reviewer:	Jan Sawyer

Sully Gomez Mystery Series

The Sully Gomez Mystery Series was written by Mel Cebulash, who has authored more than 50 books. This series is presently made up of four individual titles. The students who read these books report that they are exciting and easy to read.

Sully Gomez, the hero in each book, is a private detective in Los Angeles. He is portrayed as a guy who could have gone the wrong way. He grew up on the streets of L.A. and was saved from a probable life of crime by joining the army. Now as a P.I., he is on the right side of the law.

A Sucker for Redheads and *Set to Explode* were the two books field tested in my class. They were available for outside reading and read by men and women whose ages ranged from 22 to 50. One student commented, "I find the book *Set to Explode* a lot easier to read than a lot of other books that I have tried to read. The story line stays in line and is realistic." Another student said, "I liked the printing. It was

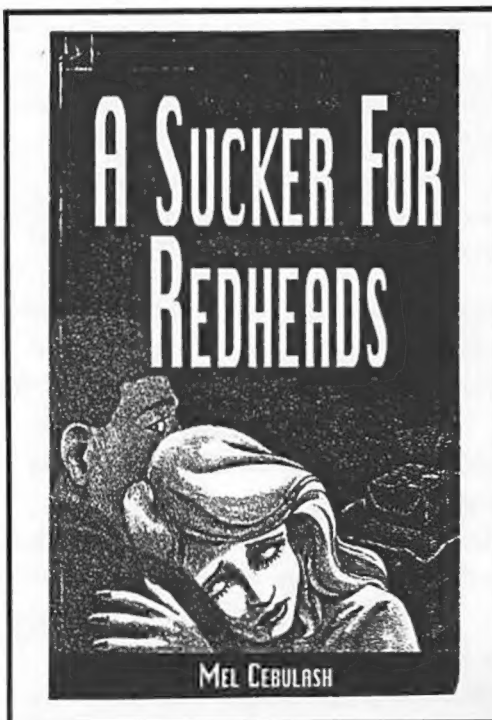
easy to read and it wasn't too hard. I had a good understanding for the book." Everyone who read one of the books wanted to read the other one.

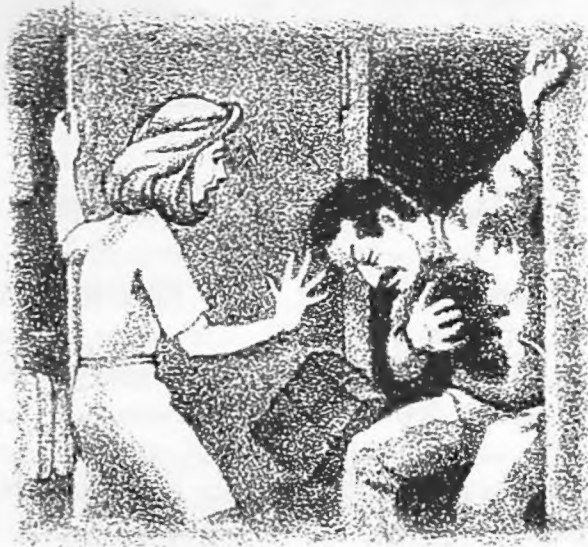
Print size is relatively large and adds to the books' easy readability, as does the

extensive use of dialogue, which provides short paragraphs. Since there is a fair degree of variety in the sentence structure, I was able to refer to the books as examples of writing that uses more than the subject-verb-object format. Although most of the chapters have a half page illustration, they're not particularly engaging and do little to enhance the stories. Each of the two books reviewed has less than 70 pages.

Finally, it should be mentioned that these

books are also available on tape. Although some of the students initially selected the book because it was on tape, the tape was quickly put aside. They found the tape "boring" and the reader's voice "didn't have any emotion."





"No," Tess said. "The guy stopped Don on the street somewhere. Don tried to get away from him. That was when Don got shot."

"Did you call the police?" I asked.

"Of course not," Tess said. "Don had been working for the guy. He'd taken a package of money from him. What was Don supposed to tell the police?"

"I have no idea," I admitted. "That's what happens when you get on the wrong side of the law."

Title:	They Did It In Canada
Author:	Ron Reaburn
Publisher:	Vancouver Community College
Available:	King Edward Campus, V.C.C. Bookstore 1155 East Broadway, Vancouver BC, V5T 1Y8
Price:	\$13.95
ISBN:	0-921218-10-9
Level:	independent
Reviewer:	Helen Thomas

They Did It In Canada

Students and instructors are always looking for Canadian reading materials. *They Did It In Canada* was designed for English as a Second Language students to introduce them to famous Canadians from the 1800's to now. Adult literacy students also enjoy reading about these men and women whose areas of expertise include: business (T.E. Eaton), art (Emily Carr), sports (Wayne Gretzky) and science (Alexander Graham Bell). The author is a freelance writer who is currently teaching at Vancouver Community College.

Students chose to read individual stories for a variety of reasons.

"I picked the one about Anne Murray because I met her in a drug store in Nova Scotia once. She's a nice lady, and it's a good story about her."

"I never heard of Glen Gould so I did it. It was good."

Sometimes adult learners may already know a great deal about the person. Other times a story may provide a new subject for research or pleasure reading.

Each story has its own exercises including prereading, comprehension, vocabulary, structure, sentence writing and some discussion questions. Some of the questions were difficult or challenging for the students. These involved such skills as sentence combining and changing sentences from active to passive. Few of the students were discouraged by this. Some comments were: "the exercises are different than in other books", "the words and questions are just about right" and "I learned about things we haven't really studied, like passive."

The print is easy to read. Questions are nicely displayed on the page, but there is not always enough space for the student's answer. The stories are set up in three columns with little white space which make these pages appear cluttered. However, the stories are interesting and well written.

I recommend this workbook as a change of pace and particularly because of its Canadian content. Students appear to enjoy and benefit from its use.



PRE-READING EXERCISE

- 1) Emily Carr was famous as a painter. She also had another talent. Before you read the story, try to guess which it was.
☐ a) writing
☐ b) music
☐ c) teaching
- 2) During her lifetime, people did not always understand Emily Carr's work and laughed at it. Now she is famous. Do you know of any other artist who became famous only after his/her death?

Emily's real name was not Klee Wyck. That was the name the Indian people of British Columbia gave her because she was always laughing. Her Indian name means "the laughing one."

Emily Carr was born in Victoria, B.C. on December 13, 1871. Her father, who was a wholesale grocer, was a very **strict** man who believed that a father should be the boss of his family. Emily did not **get on** with her father. Her mother died when she was 12 years old. Then, Emily often went off into the woods by herself to get away from the rest of the family.

³ She was the baby of the family, and she gave herself the name "Small". At one time, she badly wanted to have a dog, but her father said no. She decided to draw a dog. She said, "This is fun! I would like to draw a lot of things." At school, when she was supposed to be studying, she would often draw pictures at her desk. One day, her teacher shouted, "If I **catch** you drawing again, I will send you home! Pay attention!"

⁴ Because she enjoyed art so much, her father permitted her to have a little studio in the barn, where she used to give painting lessons to other children in the neigh-

bourhood. As she grew older, she was not **satisfied** with life in Victoria. She believed that there must be someone who could teach her new ways of seeing and painting. She said, "I need to see deeper into the spirit of what I am painting."

⁵ She travelled to London, San Francisco and Paris in order to study art. In Paris, her teacher said, "You will be one of the great women painters of our day."

⁶ However, back in Canada, people did not like her **style** of painting. Her father was so upset by her art that he refused to let anyone in the house **discuss** painting. It

Title:	Adult Basic Education Fundamental Level: Mathematics II
Author:	Leslie Tenta
Publisher:	Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour
Available:	Provincial Curriculum Publications Marketing Dept. Open Learning Agency, 4355 Mathissi Place Burnaby, BC V5G 4S8, 1-800-663-1653 fax (604)431-3381
Price:	\$40 for complete set (may change with new printing)
ISBN:	0-7718-9383-3 (complete set)
Reviewer:	Iris Strong

ABE Fundamental Level: Mathematics II

Mathematics II consists of six components which can be purchased separately or in a complete set.

- Module One: Whole Numbers (VA0133)
- Module Two:
 - Workbook 1 Decimal Fractions (VA0169)
 - Workbook 2 Common Fractions (VA0170)
 - Workbook 3 Percentage (VA0171)
- Module Three: Metric Measurement, Getting Started with Geometry, Reading Graphs (VA0135)
- Tests and Answer Keys (VA0136)

This workbook series was welcome news to students and instructors of Basic and Fundamental Level Mathematics. For many students who had been accustomed to other workbooks, receiving one with such excellent pictures and diagrams accompanying the explanations was a treat! Students who have sound reading skills say that the explanations are good; less able readers sometimes report that they need an interpreter. Regardless of reading ability, those who already have some "math sense" have excellent results.

Although some students still report that no math workbook ever allows them enough space to do all the work, this one offers considerably more than many. Pages are uncluttered, and there is suitable use

of white space. Some learners do find that there are not enough practice exercises for certain skills.

The use of estimation by rounding is stressed in all units dealing with whole numbers and fractions. This is an excellent focus in helping to make the use of math practical and relevant in everyday life. Problem solving procedures are excellent in detail, and the problems themselves are current, appropriate and Canadian.

The glossary at the end of each module is a feature that students enjoy. This gives them an opportunity to ensure that they have correct understanding of many of the new terms they are learning.

The main complaints about this math series reported by students were that answers were sometimes incorrect and difficult to find in the answer keys, and that Module Two was too large and had a binding did not seem to hold. Most of these problems have since been addressed and Module Two has recently been reprinted in three separate workbooks as indicated at the beginning of this review.

Fundamental Level Mathematics II is a series with excellent features and one well-worth using.

Subtracting Mixed Numbers from Whole Numbers

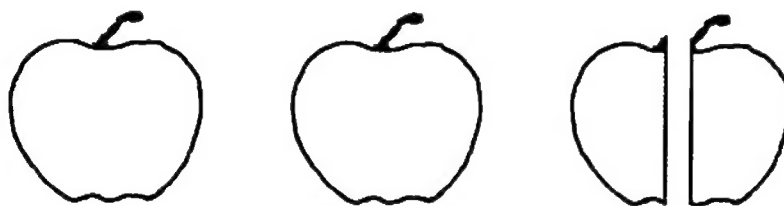
This is the start of the tricky part! You already have all the skills to do this, but the process is new.

Let's look at some apples.

You have 3 whole apples and you want to give your son 1 apple and your daughter half an apple. How will you do this?



Of course, you will cut one apple in half.



Now you have $2\frac{2}{2}$ apples! And you can easily give away $1\frac{1}{2}$ of them. Cross out $1\frac{1}{2}$ apples in the drawing. How much is left?

Here is the arithmetic for what you just did.

$$\begin{array}{r} 3 = 2\frac{2}{2} \\ - 1\frac{1}{2} = 1\frac{1}{2} \\ \hline 1\frac{1}{2} \end{array}$$

Title:	Grassroots: The Writer's Workbook
Author:	Susan Fawcett and Alvin Sandberg
Publisher:	Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994
Available:	Houghton Mifflin, The Madison Centre, 4950 Yonge St., North York, ON, M2N 6K1, (416) 250-7200
Price:	\$24.57 (US)
ISBN:	0-395-66108-0
Level:	instructor
Reviewer:	Katie Molloy

Grassroots

Grassroots is a writing process and grammar resource book designed for students who have not yet mastered basic writing skills. It can be used in a classroom, self-paced setting or teaching lab. It is broken up into 8 units subdivided into chapters which are further divided into parts. The Table of Contents of *Grassroots* is well laid out allowing quick access to information. Also available, although not reviewed here are *Instructor's Annotated Edition* and *Grassroots with Readings*.

The first unit introduces the student to the writing process. Four pre-writing techniques are explored and through a series of exercises the student is given a chance to practice each. Ideas on developing the paragraph, editing and writing the final draft are also included in unit 1. Five writing topics are assigned at the end of each unit.

The remainder of the text focuses on elements of basic grammar. Unit 2 covers subjects, verbs and sentence fragments. All you need to know about verb tenses is included in Unit 3. Unit 4, "Joining Ideas Together", deals with coordination, subordination, avoiding run-ons and comma splices, conjunctive adverbs, relative pronouns and -ing modifiers. Unit 5 explains nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions. Unit 6 covers consistency and parallelism. The mechanics

of the language are covered in Unit 7, and suggestions for improving spelling are given in Unit 8.

What I like most about *Grassroots* is the inclusion of paragraphs and essays, on high interest topics, for proofreading. Other excellent features include clear step-by-step explanations, boxed examples of concepts and coloured chapter highlights which are of great benefit to students. As each chapter is a self-contained lesson, a student can be assigned work in appropriate areas. Likewise, chapters can be taught in any sequence that fits a course design. There is an excellent Index and a new Quotation Bank offering 75 interesting quotations to spark discussion and writing.

Students feel comfortable throughout this text as each chapter follows a similar format. Once they are familiar with the Table of Contents and the Index, they use them liberally during the editing process of their own writing. The spiral binding ensures this much handled text does not fall apart.

This publication is American and there are some references to local place names. However, much work has been done to provide an ethnic and gender balance. I believe all ABE Upper Fundamental students would find this an excellent grammar text.

PART B**Punctuating Subordinating Conjunctions**

As you may have noticed in the preceding exercises, some sentences with subordinating conjunctions use a comma while others do not. Here is how it's done.

(1) Because it rained very hard, we had to leave early.

(2) We had to leave early because it rained very hard.

- Sentence (1) has a comma because the dependent idea comes before the independent idea.

Because it rained very hard	,	we had to leave early.
↓		↓
<i>Dependent idea</i>		<i>independent idea</i>

- Sentence (2) has no comma because the dependent idea follows the independent idea.

We had to leave early		because it rained very hard.
↓		↓
<i>Independent idea</i>		<i>dependent idea</i>

Use a comma after a dependent idea; do not use a comma before a dependent idea.

Practice 1

If a sentence is punctuated correctly, write C in the blank. If not, punctuate it correctly by adding a comma.

- Whenever Americans get hungry they want to eat quickly. _____
- When McDonald's opened in 1954 it started a trend that
has continued. _____
- Whether you are talking about hamburgers or pizza fast
food is big business—more than \$60 billion a year. _____

Title:	Book Discussion Clubs for Adult New Readers	
Author:	Nancy Oakley	Publisher: New Readers Press
Available:	Laubach Literacy of Canada, P.O. Box 6548, Station "A" St. John, NB E2L 4R9. or in BC Artel Educational Resources Ltd. 1-800-665-9255	
Price:	\$4	
Title:	The Book Circle for Adult New Readers	
Author:	Marina Tobin	
Available:	free from Adult Literacy Contact Centre, 622 - 510 West Hastings St., Vancouver, BC V6S 1L8, 1-800-663-1293	
Reviewer:	Helen Thomas	

Book Discussion Clubs for Adult New Readers and *The Book Circle for Adult New Readers* are two approaches to a similar concept. Both encourage adult new readers to broaden their learning through reading and discussion.

Book Discussion Clubs describes how Project LEARN in Cleveland, Ohio organizes its book discussion clubs. This group runs many such clubs and developed a pattern which sounds very effective. The students in their groups are at a grade four or five level. They meet on a monthly basis in a library. This small book includes suggestions for books to read, choosing books, discussion questions, establishing a comfortable nonjudgmental atmosphere and acquiring and circulating books. As this group is affiliated with Laubach Literacy, many of the suggestions are for books published by New Readers Press. For these discussion clubs the books are normally read ahead of time and this discussion are about personal reactions to the story. This "requires a format that will elicit participation from all members of the group, free the students from the fear of being wrong about something, and foster comfort with differences of opinion." The information is clearly presented and inspiring.

The Book Circle for Adult New Readers was a cost-shared project funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and the National Literacy Secretariat and sponsored by the Prince George Public Library and the College of New Caledonia. This manual is the result of a one year pilot project with two weekly book circles. One circle was held at the college library and the other at the public library. There was a morning and an evening group; each session was two hours long.

Many types of activities were part of this program: silent reading, shared oral reading by participants, the leader reading to the students, writing, spelling, grammar and discussion. The students read parts of their local newspapers, the Westcoast Reader, short stories and novels including *The Red Pony* by Steinbeck and *The Lilies of the Field* by W.E. Barrett. Discussion involved topics from the books and articles, but were not limited to these. Students shared their own writing, put together a recipe book and created a scrapbook of the year's work. The eclectic approach of this manual appealed to me and provided many interesting ideas.

I recommend these books for anyone interested in starting such a program or in incorporating some of these ideas into their own tutoring or teaching.

1. Book Discussion: What It Is, What It Isn't

Before we deal with the mechanics of how to organize a club, when and where to meet, how to select materials, pitfalls to avoid, all the nitty-gritty of "how to," it would probably be helpful to clarify what will happen during a discussion and how this differs from a reading lesson or reading class. The atmosphere that the discussion leader creates is critical to the success of the enterprise.

The role of the leader

It's extremely important that the discussion leader be viewed rather like a yard master in a railroad yard—someone to get things running, to help prevent collisions, and to keep things on track, or to get them back on track if they get derailed. The discussion leader is *not* there as a teacher.

Discussion format

Meaningful discussion requires a format that will elicit participation from all the members of the group, free the students from the fear of being wrong about something, and foster comfort with differences of opinion. The discussion must focus not on the *facts* of the story, but instead on how the readers *felt* about the story, the people in it, the choices they had to make, and the ways in which they worked through the problems that confronted them. And, since the focus is on feelings and reactions and not on facts, there will be no right or wrong answers. The leader will, in fact, not ask any specific questions about

own reactions to the
actions.

discussion of *Last*
ing on the Under-

Mr. Fairfield found
at Becky sent from

when Gregory and
y's old owner, and
ing him get Gregory

Student 2: My best part was when Gregory was on the boat to Canada and had to hide from the U.S. marshals, and the captain took a little part out of the engine, so the marshals had to take a lifeboat, and then the captain got the ship going again.

Leader: I didn't like it when Mr. Rombey made Gregory give him the money that Gregory had earned by doing extra work. Gregory was saving that money to buy his freedom.

Student 1: I didn't like the part where Gregory went off to help John Brown at Harper's Ferry. I knew he would be caught and put in slavery again.

Student 2: I didn't like it when Gregory got shot and locked up in jail, and then they sold him to a new master. That was when Gregory really regretted that he had not run away with Becky when he had the chance.

Title:	Just Ask: A Handbook for instructors of students being treated for mental disorders
Author:	Howard Davidson
Publisher:	Detselig Enterprises Ltd.
Available:	Temeron Books Inc. 210, 1220 Kensington Rd. NW Calgary, AB, T2N 3P5 (401) 283-0900
Price:	\$12.95
ISBN:	1-55059-05808
Level:	instructor
Reviewer:	Jan Sawyer

Just Ask

a handbook for instructors of students being treated for mental disorders

Just Ask is a worthwhile book for instructors, tutor trainers, and tutors working with students being treated for mental disorders. The idea for this book was initiated by two students who approached the author requesting that he write a book for instructors working with students "like them."

This book is well organized and is designed to be used as a resource, not to be read from cover to cover. As the author suggests in his introduction, once an instructor has identified an area of concern, this handbook can be referred to for information to help the reader reach a better understanding of a specific mental disorder. Strategies are also offered to assist tutors and instructors when they are working with students with mental disorders. The table of contents is clear and detailed so it is easy to find the subject the instructor/tutor is looking for.

All three instructors who field tested this book recommended it. They agreed that the descriptions of the seven mental disorders covered and the medications used and their effects were clear. Davidson also discusses how behaviours by students can be caused by mental disorders and/or side effects of their medication. Then he indicates how these behaviours can affect

the learning environment. This is followed by effective common-sense ways of dealing with the behaviours and problems.

Another aspect the reviewing instructors liked was the open, provocative discussion in the book. Rather than advocating a particular treatment, for example, the author provides discussion by students, instructors and doctors who offer a variety of viewpoints.

The author also addresses the issue of matching literacy tutors with students with mental disorders. One field tester stated, "I think it is important that we confront these questions, in order to appreciate and understand the conflicts and crises that may accompany the tutoring experience."

I particularly appreciate the layout of the book. It is clearly organized with boxes where graphs, case studies and lists are placed to make the information more accessible. The author successfully stays away from jargon, and since the book is Canadian, both Canadian and American trade names of medication are given. Finally, the word list, glossary, list of printed materials and films, and the extensive bibliography that is provided at the end, complements this highly recommended resource.

Chapter Five

PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS

THIS chapter describes seventeen problems identified by students, literacy coordinators, and literacy instructors that arise when students are being treated for mental disorders. These problems, also listed in Box 23, are presented in alphabetical order. Following each discussion of a difficulty are strategies for minimizing them. The strategies were recommended by students, teachers, and mental health workers. It has not been possible to include every concern raised by students and literacy workers, but the most frequently occurring ones are included.

Box 23

Problems Described in Chapter Five

Problem	Page
Attendance	97
Attention	99
Blurred and Double Vision	102
Changing Courses	103
Comprehension	107
Delusions	109
Drowsiness and Fatigue	111
Hallucinations	113
Holidays	115
Hygiene	117
Mental Regression	118
Problem Solving and Organization	121
Realistic Goals	126
Responsiveness	130
Stigma and Stereotyping	133
Tardive Dyskinesia	135
Tremors	136

Title:	Plain Language Clear and Simple
Publisher:	Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991
Available:	Canada Communication Group – Publishing, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0S9 or Associated Bookstores
Price:	\$6.95
ISBN:	0-660-14185-X
Level:	instructor
Reviewer:	Laurie Gould

Plain Language Clear and Simple

This excellent little guide on plain language writing is the result of a National Literacy Secretariat project to show governments and all institutions that serve the public how to present information in a clear and simple manner. In the words of Gerry Weiner, "Plain language writing is a cornerstone of effective service. It involves putting the client needs first: telling people what they need or want to know, using language that is easily understood, and organizing information in a clear and logical way."

Plain Language: Clear and Simple was designed for use by public servants but it is useful for anyone who is interested in plain language writing. It is available in print, braille and on audio cassette. The guide begins by explaining what plain language writing is and that it:

- reaches people who cannot read well
- helps all readers understand information
- avoids misunderstandings and errors
- saves time, because it gets the job done well the first time."

Chapter two, "Before You Start Writing" emphasizes the importance of focusing on the needs of the reader and explains how to design writing to fit the audience. What a revolutionary idea for government publications!

The next three chapters explain how to organize ideas effectively, write the way you speak, construct paragraphs and sentences that are easy to read and choose vocabulary that is familiar. Examples illustrate plain language alternatives. "**Instead of:** You will receive reactivation and assistance consistent with your requirements. **Use:** You will get the amount of help you need."

The chapter, "Appearances are Very Important" has advice on how to layout, organize and illustrate information in ways to make it attractive and straightforward. Chapter 7 explains how and why to get feedback on your writing. "Only your readers can tell you if your writing is useful, relevant and readable."

The remainder of the guide includes a summary of the key concepts and lists of useful references and resources.

Plain Language Clear and Simple is a useful and readable guide because it follows its own advice. It has helped me with writing plain language materials and I have used it as a resource in plain language workshops with health care workers, housing co-ops, elementary and secondary school teachers, and dental hygiene students. I recommend it to anyone seeking information on this topic.



6. Appearances are Very Important

The way you present information on the page is just as important as the words and sentences you use to present that information. A well-written document is harder to read if it is poorly laid-out. A good format helps highlight important information, links related sections and separates others. How your document looks can make the difference between your message being understood or lost.

Spacing

Pages of long paragraphs without lists or summaries appear harder to read than they need to.

- Keep your paragraphs short, generally no more than four or five sentences.
- Leave space between paragraphs.
- Divide your document into sections of related information.
- Don't print on every inch of space on your page. For example, if you are using a column format, use only two columns for your text on a three-column page. Part of the extra white space can be used to draw attention to important information in boxes or boldface type.
- Be generous with margin space.

Title & ISBN:	Expressions: Stories and Poems	0-8092-3993-0
	Viewpoints: Nonfiction Selections	0-8092-3993-0
	Teacher's Guide	0-809203991-4
Editor:	Cathy Niemet	
Publisher:	Contemporary Books, 1992	
Available:	Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 195 Allstate Parkway, Markham ON, L3R 4T8, 1-800-387-9776, fax (905) 477-9179	
Price:	\$14.95 each and for teacher's guide (discounts for multiple copies)	
Level:	independent	
Reviewers:	Lorraine Fox and Laurie Gould	

Viewpoints

Viewpoints and *Expressions* are two components of Contemporary's Whole Language series. These books were created especially for adult readers and include relevant, high-interest readings that introduce the learner to the work of some famous and some little known authors, including Chief Black Hawk, Christy Brown, Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, Jose Yglesias, John Updike and Shirley Jackson.

The nonfiction selections in *Viewpoints* are organized in timely themes such as family relationships, humour, personal freedom, employment and war. The teacher's guide contains a step-by-step lesson plan and activities for every theme. The selections are readable and interesting. In addition we learn of some historical figures and their lives.

Expressions is a collection of short stories and poems that welcome the learner to the world of fine literature.

"... meet some entertaining and unusual people: a minor-league ballplayer waiting for a break into the majors, ex-lovers meeting by chance, and a man who spends his day giving people tickets for their bad behavior. . . . read about men acting like boys, boys trying to be men, and two women trying to understand each other's language and culture."

Expressions

Viewpoints and *Expressions* were used in a number of literacy classes. Some students found some of the selections challenging. They worked best with students in higher level fundamental classes. The selections have not been adapted, and consequently some of the vocabulary is fairly demanding. Readings range from about a grade 4 level to a grade 7 level and so it is possible to choose selections that are appropriate to different reading levels.

Learners found the typeface easy to read and instructors liked the thematic approach. The short introductions before each selection provided the learner with background information that was helpful in understanding the reading material and as a starting point for writing exercises. The "Reflect" and "Write" sections at the end of passages encouraged interesting discussion and written work as learners tried to relate the readings to their own lives and circumstances.

Students commented that they would like material of this nature from Canadian authors, but overall found the work of these famous authors both interesting and fun to read. *Viewpoints Volume 2* was not field tested but is also now available.

John Updike has written novels, short stories, poems, and essays. In 1982, he won the Pulitzer Prize for his novel Rabbit Is Rich, and in 1991, he won his second Pulitzer for Rabbit at Rest.

Have you ever wondered about the people who lived in your home before you? The speaker of this poem moves into a home and finds items left behind by the people who used to live there. To the speaker, these items are clues to a mystery: what were the previous tenants like? As you read, ask yourself, What makes the speaker write them a note?

Note to the Previous Tenants

John Updike

Thank you for leaving the bar of soap,
the roll of paper towels,
the sponge mop, the bucket.

I tried to scrub the white floor clean,
discovered it impossible,
and realized you had tried too.

Often, no doubt. The long hair in the sink
was a clue to what? Were you
boys or girls or what?

How often did you dance on the floor?
The place was broom clean. Your lives
were a great wind that has swept by.

From *Tossing and Turning* by John Updike. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf Inc.

Title: Bringing Up Our Children
Author: Alexander, Harris, Hughs, Jefferson, McRary, Williams
Publisher: Knoxville New-Sentinel and Curriculum Associates, 1990
Available: Curriculum Associates Inc., 1-800-225-0248
 5 Esquire Rd., PO Box 2001, N. Billerica, MA 01862 0901
Price: 1 - 4 copies \$8.95 (US) 5 or more copies \$5.95 (US)
ISBN: 1-55915-416-0
Level: functional
Reviewer: Lorraine Fox

Bringing Up Our Children

Bringing Up Our Children contains a selection of articles that were originally published in the Knoxville News-Sentinel Knoxville, Tennessee. This book brings to parents and children the opportunity to have discussions around many topics affecting families in these times:

A family literacy group will find this book to be a useful resource that provides the value of an ice-breaker on sensitive topics, which traditionally have been encountered by parents and children.

These comments come from a parent who has used the book. "This book is dedicated to parents. It shows us the stages of child behaviour and gives much advice about how to treat children. Also it shows us what the world looks like from a child's point of view. The book tells us about how they think, what their problems are, and what they expect from us."

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I have found this book to be one of the most helpful publications used in our family literacy group, but I often change name and places to make the stories relevant for my First Nation adults. The only objections to

the book would be the lack of Canadian content and omission of any reference to gay and lesbian parenting.

The "For More Help" sidebar included on many pages gives information on other relevant publications. Sometimes included with it, a section called "Read Aloud" suggests book titles to encourage reading and lessons parents wish their children to learn. "Things to Try" gives simple suggestions that can be made more

personal for individual families.

In conclusion, another student's quote. "I like this book because it contains a lot of information and good examples of how to treat our children."



Chapter 9

Children and their friends

Seventeen-year-old Debbie's face, hair, and figure made others take notice.

Few, if any, at her high school could compare to her beauty.

Yet, even this lovely young lady had problems.

She was depressed. She felt unsure of herself. She was lonely.

Sometimes she made herself feel better by being cruel to others who weren't as pretty as she was. She would tease them about their clothes or laugh because they were not popular.

Acting this way did not really

make her feel any better, but some of her friends egged her on. Then she felt worse and worse about herself.

Debbie ended up being treated by a doctor for her depression.

All teenagers are affected by other people their age. Sometimes the influence is good. Other times — when they are pressured to act badly or to experiment with drugs or sex — the influence is bad.

As children get older, friends become very important. It is natural that they start spending

more time with their friends.

Some parents think when teenagers spend so much time with their friends, they no longer need or care about their families. That is not true. Teenagers probably need their parents even more then. That way they can explore their world and still return to the safety of their homes.

Often teens try to belong to a group by fixing their hair certain ways or wearing different clothes. Sometimes they will even talk differently to fit in with their

Title:	Helen Keller
Author:	Stewart and Polly Anne Graff
Publisher:	Dell Publishing, 1991
Available:	at your local bookstore
	In Vancouver at Kidsbooks (604) 738-5335, fax 738-5362
Price:	\$4.50
ISBN:	0-440-40439-8
Level:	basic /functional
Reviewer:	Iris Strong

★★★ Helen Keller ★★★ ★★★ Crusader for the Blind and Deaf ★★★

All students interviewed really enjoyed this timeless historical biography. Having some previous knowledge of Helen Keller – perhaps through seeing the movie, The Miracle Worker – gives them a framework for reading this Dell Young Yearling publication, *Helen Keller: Crusader for the Deaf and Blind*. Favourable comments pertain to the large clear print and ample white space, simple yet effective black and white illustrations and easy to read text. The fifty-eight pages are divided into ten chapters, each with a precise and motivating title: "Darkness", "The Stranger", "W-a-t-e-r", "Discoveries", "I Can Speak", "A New Career", "War", "Around the World" and "Peace". Even new readers are keen to read it from cover to cover. Several have read it more than once; some have taken it home to share with their families.

This book is excellent as a catalyst for class discussion on various subjects: disabilities, crusading for better conditions for people with impairments, parenting, education,

and personal characteristics such as patience, strength and attitude toward life. Comparisons between then and now can be made with regard to many of these topics also. When asked to identify with main characters, some learners were quick to recognize that they lacked Helen's determination or Annie's patience. One student said, "What I find so astonishing is Annie's persistence and dedication over the fifty years of working with Helen, despite the two world wars and other setbacks in life." One lady was especially moved by the story; her son is going blind and is experiencing some of the same limitations that Helen did. Many students commented that reading the story and then thinking about their lives, made them realize how lucky they are. One said, "I like this book from the bottom of my heart because it . . . taught me to be strong when hardship comes." Another put it this way: "The main message of the book is that you must get on with your life no matter what problems you have. That's a good message for people who are learning to read and write."

★★★★★ GOLDEN OLDIE ★★★★★

Helen enjoyed the adventures with Annie. But she did not know that the stranger was her teacher. She was very unhappy when Annie tried to make her obey.

Annie did not believe that Helen's parents were right to let Helen always do exactly as she pleased. At mealtimes Helen walked around the table. She dipped her fingers into everyone's plates and gobbled whatever she wanted.

Annie made Helen sit in her own chair and eat from her own plate. Helen was furious. When Annie gave

threw it on the floor and
They spent a whole after
Annie insisted that Helen

Mrs. Keller was upset
have Helen punished," she

Annie was firm. "We
know we love her," she
not let her think she is
is blind and deaf. She must
children."

Helen's bad temper
locked Annie in her room



Title: Spellex Word Finder
Author: Moore, Talbot, Woodruff
Publisher: Curriculum Associates, 1988, 1975
Available: Curriculum Associates Inc. 1-800-225-0248
 5 Esquire Rd., PO Box 2001, N. Billerica MA 01862 0901
Price: 1- 4 copies \$5.99 (US) each, 5 or more copies \$2.99 (US)
ISBN: 0-89187-133-0
Level: all levels
Reviewer: Joyce Vowles

Spellex

The *Spellex Word Finder* is a handy reference book for writers at any level. New writers will appreciate its clean, uncluttered layout, while more experienced writers can use it as a fast and easy spelling check. The book's authors suggest students use *Spellex* as a tool for proofreading their manuscripts.

Spellex boasts more than 3,000 alphabetically arranged root words in its 125 pages, with several lined pages to add the student's own words. Entries include various forms of these root words and abbreviations where appropriate.

The large print and clear typeface make using *Spellex* quick and easy. Its convenient size makes it easy to carry and its tall, narrow shape makes it difficult to lose in the bottom of a bookbag.

Unfortunately *Spellex* is an American publication and, as such, uses American spellings. Inexperienced writers may also be confused by homonyms as there are no references to usage or meaning.

These shortcomings aside, *Spellex* can be useful in equipping students to be more independent, confident writers.

S

silent

silent silence, silenced, silencing, silencer, silently

silk silks, silky, silken

silly sillier, silliest, silliness

silver silvers, silvered, silvering, silvery

similar similarity, similarities, simile

simple simpler, simplest, simply, simplicity, simplify, simplifies, simplified, simplifying

since

sincere sincerely, sincerity, sincerest

sing sings, sang, sung, singing, singer

single singly, singular

sink sinks, sank, sunk, sinking, sinker, sunken

sir sirs

sister sisters, sister's

sit sits, sat, sitting, sitter

The Bulletin's Board

The Literacy Materials Committee received funding for 1994-1995 from the National Literacy Secretariat and the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour, BC. Listed below are some of the other materials that have been produced recently in projects funded by cost-shared grants and information on how to acquire them.

Adult Literacy Cost-Shared Fund Materials

- *Learning to Learn: Impacts of the Adult Basic Education Experience on the Lives of Participants* by Patty Bossort, Bruce Cottingham and Leslie Gardner reports a qualitative research study initiated by the Adult Basic Education Association of British Columbia and conducted through interviews with 45 former ABE students and 15 ABE instructors in BC. Available free from Adult Literacy Contact Centre
- *The 1994 Summer Literacy Institute Final Report* by Mary Thompson Boyd documents the process of organizing the first Summer Literacy Institute in BC including needs assessment, strategy and results, Institute design, summary of sessions, evaluation results, recommendations. Available for \$15 from Literacy BC.
- *Literacy and Consumerism – An Inquiry* describes how students and instructors in two fundamental ABE programs identified problem areas for adults with low literacy and numeracy skills in grocery stores and produced *Let's Go Shopping*, a handbook designed for low literacy adults to use when shopping. Contact Lorrie Lane 489-2751, PO Box 8500 East Kootenay Community College, Cranbrook BC V1C 5L7
- *Memories*— a collection of stories and poems by women 19-89 from different backgrounds and cultures who came together at Kiwassa Neighborhood House and shared their stories with Vancouver Community College instructors Vicky Hallett and Ingrid Kolsteren. Available free from Adult Literacy Contact Centre
- *Ensuring Equal Access: A Regional Literacy Development Plan for Northwest British Columbia* by Melissa Munn. Available free from Houston Link to Learning, Box 1277 Houston BC, V0J1Z0, (604) 845-2727 fax 845-3521.

Circulating Materials

Mailing List

Permanent Collection

The materials reviewed in the 11 issues of the *Literacy Materials Bulletin* are available on loan from *Literacy B.C.* Suite 1122, 510 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1L8, Tel. (604)687-5077 or fax (604) 687-5076.

A permanent set of materials from all eleven *Bulletins* is available for viewing at the *Adult Literacy Contact Centre*, Suite 622, 510 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8, Tel. 684-0624 in the Lower Mainland, 1-800-663-1293 toll free in BC or fax 684-8520.

To be added to the *Literacy Materials Bulletin* mailing list or to order back copies of *Bulletins 1 – 10*, please contact the Adult Literacy Contact Centre.

LITERACY MATERIALS RECOMMENDATION FORM

Title _____

Author _____ Publisher _____

Level (please circle) *Basic (0-3) ** Functional (4-6) ***Independent (7-9)

Why do you recommend this title: _____

Please attach copy of one page and table of contents

Recommended by: _____

LITERACY MATERIALS REQUEST FORM

What kind of material(s) would you like the Literacy Materials Committee to seek out, field test and review. Please include information about the content, level and format (book, video, software, etc.) you require: _____

Requested by: _____

Send completed forms to:

**Laurie Gould
Basic Education Department
Vancouver Community College (KEC)
1155 East Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1Y8**